

# DEI Leadership Seal Program



## State Bar of California DEI Leadership Seal Program Frequently Asked Questions

These FAQs are a living document. They are subject to revision and will be supplemented and updated as needed.

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### 1. Overview and Application

#### 1.1 What is the State Bar DEI Leadership Seal program?

The DEI Leadership Seal Program is an optional program that employers with California attorneys can participate in to signal their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

As part of its [2022 Diversity Report Card](#), the State Bar of California published [Calls to Action](#) that legal employers and attorneys can implement to support greater DEI in the workplace. The DEI Leadership Seal program recognizes California legal employers that commit to and implement specific DEI action items.

#### 1.2 How do I apply for participation in the DEI Leadership Seal program?

To be considered for participation, please complete the [DEI Leadership Seal Application form](#) and provide the required supporting documentation by **March 29, 2024**.

### 1.3 What does my organization have to do to participate?

An employer may participate in the program as either a **committed participating employer** or a **seal recipient**. To be recognized as a **committed participating employer**, an employer must **commit** to implementing at least five of the ten Action Items. Committed participating employers will have one year to implement the selected Action Items. The one-year implementation window starts when an employer's application is approved. Once an employer **implements** at least five of the ten Action Items, it may be deemed a **seal recipient**.

Committed participating employers will be listed on the State Bar website. DEI Leadership Seal recipients will be listed on the State Bar website and receive a seal that they can use on their web and print materials to signal their participation in the program to employees, job candidates, clients, and more.

### 1.4 What if my employer has already implemented at least five of the ten Action Items? Do I need to wait a year to receive the DEI Leadership Seal?

If your organization has already implemented five of the ten Action Items (including the two that are required) at the time of application, please indicate that on your application and provide the requested documentation. If your employer's implementation of the Action Items is sufficient, you can receive the DEI Leadership Seal as soon as your application is reviewed.

### 1.5 Are there different implementation or recognition levels in the DEI Leadership Seal program?

The DEI Leadership Seal program will recognize bronze, silver, and gold seal recipients, based on the number of Action Items implemented.

- Employers that implement **five** Action Items will be recognized as **bronze**-tier recipients.
- Employers that implement **seven** Action Items will be recognized as **silver**-tier recipients.
- Employers that implement **nine** Action Items will be recognized as **gold**-tier recipients.

All participating employers, regardless of tier, must commit to implementing the first two Action Items and then select from the remaining eight.

## 2. Eligibility and Employer Requirements

### 2.1 What types of employers are eligible to apply for the DEI Leadership Seal?

Employers, regardless of sector, that employ California-licensed attorneys are eligible to participate in the DEI Leadership Seal Program. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, law firms of all sizes, in-house legal departments, legal academia, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies with attorney staff.

**2.2 Can employers with offices both in and out of California (such as national or international law firms) participate in the program?**

Yes. Employers may choose to commit to and implement the Action Items for either their entire firm or only their California offices. If an employer commits to and implements the Action Items for specific offices, only those offices would be listed as participating employers and eligible to use the DEI Leadership Seal on their materials.

**2.3 Can legal departments or teams within a larger employer (like a corporation's legal department, or a university's law school) participate in the program?**

Yes. Employers may choose to commit to and implement the Action Items for either their entire organization or only their legal department or team. If an employer commits to and implements the Action Items only for their legal department, only that department would be listed as a participating employer and eligible to use the DEI Leadership Seal on its materials.

**2.4 Can solo practitioners participate in the program?**

Unfortunately, currently, the program is not well-suited for or targeted to solo practitioners because the Action Items focus on improving diversity, equity, and inclusion among attorneys and staff of multiple people. The State Bar will consider opportunities for solo practitioners to engage in its DEI work in other ways and encourages feedback on how best to do so.

**2.5 Is participation in the DEI Leadership Seal Program required for employers with California attorneys?**

No. The DEI Leadership Seal Program is voluntary.

### **3. Action Items and Implementation**

**3.1 Where did the list of Action Items come from?**

The Action Items were derived, in part, from the Calls to Action in the State Bar's 2022 Diversity Report Card and based on research on best practices to improve workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as feedback from various stakeholders across a variety of sectors in the legal profession. The [Calls to Action](#), available by sector, provide

additional best practices and resources. Calls to Action for attorneys are also available to encourage individuals to take an active role in advancing DEI in the workplace.

### **3.2 When will my employer receive the DEI Leadership Seal?**

The program will have annual application windows for participating employers to indicate their commitment to, or implementation of, five of the ten Action Items. Applications for employers who are not currently participating in the program are due March 29, 2024. Please allow approximately two months for State Bar staff to review and respond to applications.

Committed participating employers will then have up to **one year** to implement the Action Items before being recognized as seal recipients and receiving the DEI Leadership Seal to use on their own materials. For current committed participating employers, who applied in 2023, employers must demonstrate implementation of five of the ten Action Items by **June 14, 2024**, to receive the DEI Leadership Seal.

### **3.4 Does the State Bar have any guidance on how to implement the Action Items?**

The State Bar has created a [Resource Guide](#) that provides tips and best practices to consider when implementing the Action Items. The guide is intended to be one tool to help organizations develop and achieve their DEI goals and is not intended to provide step-by-step instructions.

## **4. Continuing Program Participation**

### **4.1 My employer is already a seal recipient. What documentation is required to remain in the program?**

DEI Leadership Seal recipients must submit an annual attestation form to confirm that they continue to have at least five of the ten Action Items implemented. Current seal recipients, approved in 2023, must submit the [DEI Leadership Seal Attestation form](#) by **February 16, 2024**.

### **4.2 My employer is already a seal recipient, but we have implemented more Action Items and want to move up to a higher tier. What are the next steps? What documentation is required?**

DEI Leadership Seal recipients who want to advance tiers must complete and submit a [DEI Leadership Seal Tier Advancement Application](#) and supporting documentation. The State Bar will provide several opportunities throughout the year for seal recipients to submit this documentation and advance tiers. For the next review cycle, the application and materials are due **February 16, 2024**, with their required attestation form (see question 4.1). Seal recipients that want to advance tiers must still submit an attestation

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form to affirm implementation of the Action Items for which their materials have already been reviewed and approved.

**4.3 My employer is a committed participating employer. What do we need to do to continue participating in the program? What documentation is required to remain in the program?**

Committed participating employers that applied and were approved in 2023 must implement at least 5 of the 10 Action Items by **June 14, 2024**. Please use the [DEI Leadership Seal Tier Advancement Application](#) to submit this material by the June 14 deadline.

**4.4 My employer is a committed participating employer, but we have implemented at least five of the Action Items. Do we need to wait until June to receive the DEI Leadership Seal?**

Committed participating employers who have implemented five or more Action Items and want to receive the DEI Leadership Seal before the June deadline must complete and submit a [DEI Leadership Seal Tier Advancement Application](#) and supporting documentation. There will be several opportunities throughout the year for committed employers to submit this documentation and receive the seal early. To be considered for tier advancement in the next review cycle, please submit this material by **February 16, 2024**.

## **5. Program Benefits**

**5.1 How can my employer use the DEI Leadership Seal?**

DEI Leadership Seal recipients can use the seal on their website and print materials, including on their career website and job postings, promotional materials to clients, and more.

**5.2 What benefits are available to participating employers?**

Participating employers and seal recipients will be listed on the State Bar [website](#). The State Bar plans to provide opportunities for participating employers to convene and discuss their DEI efforts, for example, at future Diversity Summits. The State Bar regularly hosts Diversity Summits to convene stakeholders to present and discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices in the legal profession.

The State Bar is also exploring additional benefits and opportunities it can provide to or facilitate for participating employers and seal recipients. These might include opportunities to participate in social media campaigns about the program, preferred job boards, and career fairs.

## 6. The State Bar and DEI

### 6.1 What is the goal of the DEI Leadership Seal Program?

In support of the mission to “support... efforts for greater access, and inclusion in, the legal system,” the State Bar aims to encourage and incentivize legal employers to take action to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in their organizations. Similarly, promoting diversity and inclusion in the legal system is a key priority of the State Bar’s 2022–2027 Strategic Plan. A more diverse, accessible, and inclusive legal workplace improves the experience of employees and their clients. A legal profession that better reflects the diversity of California’s communities can improve public access to, and fair treatment in, the legal system.

### 6.2 Why is the State Bar administering this program?

The State Bar’s mission is to protect the public and includes the primary functions of licensing, regulation and discipline of attorneys; the advancement of the ethical and competent practice of law; and **support of efforts for greater access to, and inclusion in, the legal system**. Additionally, the State Bar of California’s [strategic goals](#) include “promot[ing] diversity and inclusion in the legal system.”

### 6.3 Is the State Bar, as an employer, participating in the program?

Yes. The State Bar earned the gold tier DEI Leadership Seal in January 2024. The State Bar recruited three impartial external reviewers to read and score the State Bar’s application and submitted materials.

### 6.4 Who do I contact if I have additional questions?

Please email [DEILeadershipSeal@calbar.ca.gov](mailto:DEILeadershipSeal@calbar.ca.gov) with any questions or feedback.

## 7. Updates

- The FAQs were updated and renumbered on January 22, 2024.